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Letter dated 1 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a Co-Chairs' statement from the high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform held in New York on 4 November 2013, which was signed on 19 March 2014 by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, and myself (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have this statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 33 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) František **Ružička**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 1 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

High-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform: strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform

Co-Chairs' statement

In August 2013, the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform was released. For the report to have its intended impact, efforts are needed to collectively reflect on the way ahead regarding the implementation of its key messages. Against this background, on 4 November 2013, the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform held a high-level meeting to launch the second report of the Secretary-General and to discuss the way forward. The meeting was chaired by the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends, the Permanent Representatives of the Slovak Republic and the Republic of South Africa. The meeting was opened by Ambassador František Ružička, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations. The opening was followed by keynote speeches by Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mr. Noel Sinclair, Deputy Chef de Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly; and Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, and Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, also delivered key messages on the Secretary-General's report. The meeting was attended by over 120 representatives of 80 Member States.

The inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force[1] also participated in the meeting. The joint Chairs of the Task Force at the principals level, Mr. Dmitri Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Programme, provided their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in implementing the report. Members of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, also made statements recalling the linkages between security sector reform and related areas such as small arms and light weapons, anti-corruption, and countering transnational threats. Also represented was the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The keynote speakers all recognized the significant achievements of the United Nations in strengthening its comprehensive support to security sector reform. The Deputy Secretary-General noted that, over the past years, security sector reform has moved from being a little known concept within the United Nations to becoming a core element of the Organization's approach to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and

[1] The inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force is composed of 14 United Nations departments, offices, agencies, funds and programmes that are engaged in support for security sector reform. See http://unssr.unlb.org/TaskForceMembers.aspx.

development. He highlighted that the future of the United Nations in security sector reform rests on the vision and support of Member States. The President of the General Assembly noted that the relevance and applicability of the report is supported by empirical evidence on the ground. Moreover, he underlined that security sector reform is an important vehicle towards supporting some of the key principles in the Charter of the United Nations such as social progress and better standards of living for the people. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic observed that the success of the United Nations is visible in the growing demand for United Nations assistance to security sector reform efforts. Moreover, he called for measures to ensure that the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, and its secretariat, the Security Sector Reform Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, have the appropriate capabilities and resources for the challenging work ahead.

The Secretary-General's report is recognized to be a direct outcome of a Member State's initiative. Nigeria in its presidential statement of October 2011 (S/PRST/2011/19) had requested "an assessment of the United Nations support for Security Sector Reform". Numerous Member States took the floor to commend the report and to provide insights on important considerations for moving forward. This Co-Chairs' statement summarizes the main discussions and sets out priorities identified. In particular, six key areas for enhancing support were acknowledged as being of crucial importance in implementing the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform.

The six key areas identified are detailed below:

- Security sector reform and peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. The challenges, opportunities and benefits of security sector reform across peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development need to be fully understood and reflected in United Nations support to security sector reform.

- The principle of national ownership. While challenges persist, particularly in fragile contexts, there is a growing body of experience and knowledge among Member States on implementing nationally owned security sector reform. The United Nations should continue to gather best practices and lessons learned.

- Partnerships with regional and subregional organizations. Existing engagement with the African Union should be deepened; at the same time partnerships should be extended beyond Africa.

- Security sector reform expertise and knowledge. The United Nations role in enabling the exchange of experience and knowledge, including South-South exchange, should be strengthened.

- Monitoring and evaluation of security sector reform. The United Nations should strengthen its role in monitoring and evaluation and should develop national capacity for monitoring and evaluation as an important element of national ownership.

- United Nations capacity to deliver. Security sector mandates in the field need to be adequately resourced; the mandate and resources of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and its secretariat should be reinforced to meet demand.

Security sector reform and peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. The challenges, opportunities and benefits of security sector reform across peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development need to be fully understood and reflected in United Nations support to security sector reform.

The Secretary-General's report on security sector reform acknowledges that security sector reform has become a central component of the United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development agendas. Member States recognized that this reflects a significant cultural shift for the Organization which should be commended. However, there is a need to now focus on attaining the full potential of security sector reform across these contexts. In the area of peacekeeping, strengthening security sector reform requires an enhanced focus on support to the delivery of basic security as a means to strengthen confidence-building. Security sector reform in peacebuilding contexts also requires enhanced efforts to support inclusive national dialogue in view of strengthening the principles of democratic governance. The need to reinforce the nexus between peacekeeping and peacebuilding remains an important challenge. Finally, in the context of development, there is an increasing understanding that security sector reform may depend on the ability to look at security through a development lens, as well as through a broader human rights lens. For instance, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda recognizes the need to ensure that the upcoming development agenda reflects peace, security and the rule of law as critical components of the next Millennium Development Goals. Participants called for the adoption of an explicit target of reducing armed violence in the post-2015 development framework. Ultimately, the United Nations support to security sector reform across these contexts requires reflection on how to balance the need for long-term institutional reforms with the need for basic and immediate service delivery. This requires linking support to other related initiatives, such as reduction of armed violence or protection of human rights. It moreover requires a strong focus on community-based approaches and dialogue, for instance, strengthening the relationship between the security sector and communities, supporting the building of partnerships with women and youth groups among others, and supporting engagement at the local level. The United Nations is well placed to provide such holistic support to Member States across the peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development contexts because United Nations actors engaged in security sector reform cover the full spectrum. Member States underlined that security sector reform demands the combined effort of all actors across the United Nations, which points to the important role of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force. Numerous opportunities were raised to capitalize on entry points provided by Task Force members, such as considering linking security sector reform to the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty or to the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in countering narcotics and fighting corruption. In moving the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform forward, there were also calls for enhanced cooperation across Task Force members, but also beyond, such as with the World Bank and other highly relevant institutions.

The principle of national ownership. While challenges persist, particularly in fragile contexts, there is a growing body of experience and knowledge among Member States on implementing nationally owned security sector reform. The United Nations should continue to gather best practices and lessons learned.

In line with the Secretary-General's report, the most fundamental principle of United Nations support to security sector reform is that of national ownership. Member States widely commended the United Nations for seeking to operationalize the principle of national ownership, notably through the development of the United Nations integrated technical guidance note on national ownership of security sector reform. It was underlined that a security sector that prioritizes service delivery for the people will increase the legitimacy of the State and enable political stability. National ownership should be supported through an enhanced focus on building capacity and institutional frameworks for the security sector that addresses immediate security needs. At the same time, there is a need for awareness of the existence of underlying tensions between national ownership and international support. A prime example was recognized to be that of the coordination of security sector reform efforts. There were calls among Member States for the United Nations to take up a stronger coordination role to address the often perceived lack of coherence — and at times even duplication — of international support that is prevalent across all intervention contexts. The United Nations is considered the appropriate platform for supporting international coordination due to its legitimacy and strategic role. However, there is a need to carefully balance the potential coordination role of the United Nations with national ownership by ensuring that international support is made on the basis of clearly defined national priorities. Member States shared their experiences in leading security sector reform processes that are nationally led but conducted in cooperation with international actors. It was recognized that there is a need to draw lessons from some of these successful experiences. The potential tensions between national ownership and international support were also considered to be particularly challenging in fragile contexts which are characterized by the inability of the State to ensure the delivery of basic security. Member States requested further reflection in regard to support to national ownership in these fragile contexts.

Partnerships with regional and subregional organizations. Existing engagement with the African Union should be deepened; at the same time partnerships should be extended beyond Africa.

The Secretary-General in his report calls on the United Nations to support regional and subregional organizations in developing security sector reform frameworks that build on regional perspectives. Member States recognized that the viability, legitimacy and sustainability of the United Nations approach to security sector reform depend on the extent to which it is informed by and responsive to various regional frameworks. It was underlined that such frameworks should include both policies and implementing mechanisms. In this context, the long-term partnership of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the African Union, which has resulted in the adoption of a continental policy for security sector reform, was commended. More efforts, however, are required to deepen such engagement through support to implementation mechanisms. At the same time, other regions should be encouraged to also develop such frameworks in order to lend a truly

global character to the work of the United Nations in this critical area. Member States called for the United Nations to support more efforts to engage with organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Organization of American States, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It was noted that there is a current window of opportunity to engage with OSCE. The upcoming Swiss Chairmanship of OSCE has made strengthening security sector governance within OSCE one of the 10 priorities of its Chairmanship. Given the current reflections within OSCE, the view was raised that the time is ripe to think about revitalizing United Nations collaboration with OSCE as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter in order to build on the converging interests on both sides. This could lead to an exchange of lessons learned and best practices on security sector reform support, as well as efforts towards strengthening the coherence of international support. Thus, there were calls for enhanced efforts to engage with OSCE, as well as other regional and subregional organizations, in order to support partnerships that contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of security sector reform efforts on the ground.

Security sector reform expertise and knowledge. The United Nations role in enabling the exchange of experience and knowledge, including South-South exchange, should be strengthened.

The Secretary-General in his report recognizes that Member States possess rich experiences in security sector reform which should be shared. There are a range of countries within the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform and beyond which have led their own national security sector reform processes and have significant experience to share. For instance, South Africa raised its experience in supporting an inclusive security sector reform process which among other things was anchored in the participation of women. Other Member States highlighted their experiences in supporting holistic approaches to security sector reform based on the principles of national ownership and democratic governance. It was emphasized that the United Nations needs to encourage ways to capture this knowledge and to ensure that it is made available. This requires broadening the pool of civilian experts, and exploiting the capacities that exist at both the regional and subregional levels. Member States should support specialized civilian capacities such as the United Nations security sector reform roster. At the same time, the Task Force needs to ensure that the necessary training is provided to meet the growing demand for expertise. The United Nations should also further identify innovative ways to leverage South-South cooperation into the discourse on security sector reform.

Monitoring and evaluation of security sector reform. The United Nations should strengthen its role in monitoring and evaluation and should develop national capacity for monitoring and evaluation as an important element of national ownership.

The Secretary-General in his report calls on the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force to enhance its role in monitoring and evaluating security sector reform support. It was recognized that it is the Organization's duty to ensure that its interventions are reaching their full potential and are having a meaningful impact on people's lives. Ultimately, whether citizens feel safe and have confidence in the security sector is considered to be the ultimate measure of success. Monitoring and

evaluation is an important tool for ensuring that this key objective is being met. It also enables identifying changing needs and supporting necessary adjustments within long-term support to security sector reform processes. Member States underlined that the Task Force has an important role in ensuring that United Nations delivery on the ground is enhanced, for instance, through reviewing progress and ensuring an appropriate focus on respect for the core principles of security sector reform. This will require being innovative in finding ways to move beyond the focus on measuring quantitative elements of security sector reform support to measuring qualitative aspects which are often less visible but more important in indicating changes in people's lives.

United Nations capacity to deliver. Security sector mandates in the field need to be adequately resourced; the mandate and resources of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and its secretariat should be reinforced to meet demand.

Member States widely commended the impressive work and significant achievements of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force. There was a general consensus that the Task Force has played a highly important role in strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform. The Task Force has enhanced United Nations coherence in security sector reform support by representing a "single door" that Member States and United Nations field components can knock on to seek policy advice and technical guidance. In addition to the numerous tasks outlined in the Secretary-General's report, there is a need for the Task Force to enhance the coherent delivery of support on the ground. This includes, for instance, strengthening the United Nations role in the coordination of assistance on the ground, support to joint resource mobilization strategies, or strengthening engagement with other United Nations task forces such as the Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking. This entails reflection on how best to use the existing task force mechanism to reach some of the next goals outlined in the report. At the same time, there is a dire need to match expectations and mandates with resources. It was recognized that a number of the priorities listed essentially depend on the ability of the Task Force and its secretariat to undertake them. However, this requires ensuring that the Task Force, and in particular its secretariat, have the necessary resources to take on their important roles based on a more permanent and predictable approach to funding.

The way forward

General consensus was reached that the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform has played an important role in supporting the strengthening of the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform by providing a platform for Member States to share experience, stimulate discussion and build consensus around the agenda. While significant achievements have been consolidated by the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, it was recognized that there will still be much work to be done in taking forward the recommendations in the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform. Reviewing progress and ensuring continued feedback to Member States on the implementation of these recommendations is of crucial importance and should continue to take place with

the support of the Group of Friends. In this regard, the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends encourage the current reflections to promote, in cooperation with Security Council members, a discussion on security sector reform within the Security Council next year to further substantiate this dialogue at a higher level.

(*Signed*) František **Ružička**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Slovak Republic

(*Signed*) Kingsley **Mamabolo**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Republic of South Africa